

BEIJING TODAY

METRO

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Dreamscapes of youth

There's still a few surprises from the galleries in Beijing's 798 Art Zone. This week *Beijing Today* found two great exhibitions by young artists.

Beyond Art Space is introducing three up-and-coming artists. Born in the 1980s, they fret about the future in a joint exhibition called Never Land.

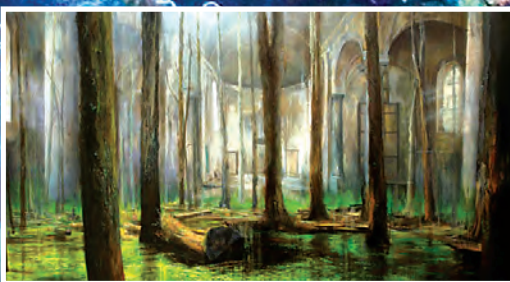
Its neighbor, Asian Art Works, has an exhibition of red and green floral furniture by Liang Long, front man of the local Beijing band Second Hand Rose. Liang's work reflects strong nostalgia for his childhood spent in China's rural northeast.

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Private recyclers leave ring of e-waste

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Reporters curate China's young artists

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Romantic dining by Worker's Stadium

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Standard character list to include 45 rare names

By Zhao Hongyi

The Ministry of Education and the National Language and Words Committee slashed the list of commonly used Chinese characters last week.

The new Standard Chinese Characters Table drops 195 characters from the list, lowering the total to 8,105.

It also includes 45 formerly rare characters in the new standard, forcing software manufacturers to update their input methods.

The first group of 3,500 characters includes basic characters that everyone studying Chinese is expected to know.

The second group of 3,000 characters and final 1,605 characters are defined as difficult, and are mostly limited to use in family names, addresses and scientific terms, as well as some classical passages appearing in middle school textbooks.

The ministry said the new table is intended to enrich the pool of Chinese characters for the use in computers and enable Chinese readers to grasp the deeper meaning behind words.

Chinese characters are the only pictographic writing system in common use today. Similar systems used



Students compete to see who can write the most unusual Chinese characters on CCTV.

in ancient Egypt and Babylon fell out of use more than a millennium ago.

Unlike alphabets, such as the Greek, Latin and Cyrillic alphabets used to write European languages, pictographic systems can be challenging to memorize.

"I used to hand write the zhe (诘) of my name on my boarding cards, ID cards and deposit cards, because computers could never print it," said Wang Zhe, a business manager at Honghai Merchant.

These hand-written cards had to be signed and stamped by the police station and presented with a certificate of their legality.

"In fact, in primary school I had a lot of classmates who mistakenly called me 'jiji' instead of 'zhe,'" Wang said.

Wang Miao is another example. Her name has the character miao (淼) written with three water radicals. "Many of my classmates and colleagues call me Wang Sanshui," she said. "It doesn't sound like a girl's name."

The rare characters are a source of constant trouble for banks and telecommunication companies.

The China Mobile outlet near Tuanjiehu outlet often meet these problem.

"Our computers do not support any Chinese charac-

ter input system except the Microsoft standard," said Chang Wanli, manager of the China Mobile outlet near Tuanjiehu. "Its limitations are a frequent embarrassment."

To get around the problem, China Mobile frequently breaks names down into radicals or replaces uncommon characters with question marks.

Banks have a more uniform way of handling such names.

"If we cannot type the character in our computer, we usually type its (pinyin) pronunciation," said Gu Xiaohui, lobby manager of Bank of China's Baijia-



The 45 rare characters appear in dictionaries but not in computer input methods.

zhuang branch.

A client named Wang Shen could be written as "Wang SHEN," where the uncommon character is represented in capitalized pinyin.

The government has made language standardization a priority for many years. The last revision of the character list was published in 2009. This year's change is the government's ninth revision.

Uncommon characters remain a popular curiosity, especially for children.

China Central Television (CCTV) hosts nationwide contests where middle school students compete to see who can accurately write the most characters. It is one of the network's most popular programs.

Writing ability has been on the decline since the advent of home computers and mobile phones. Many see the contest as a way to preserve an essential skill.

Blind drama wins applause at National Theater

By Zhao Hongyi

The play *The Facial Mold of a Maid by the Seine*, written to commemorate the poet Feng Zhi, was performed this week at the Pioneer Stage of the National Theatre.

But this production was different from the June show at Beijing People's Art Theatre: this time the cast was blind.

The actors, mostly farmers, shopkeepers and masseurs, spent 37 days training for the drama. Rather than moving about the stage they recited their lines loudly and in a fixed position.

The Facial Mold of a Maid by the Seine is based on the real life experiences of Feng, who purchased a copy of *L'Inconnue de la Seine* from a small shop while studying abroad in Germany. The tag accompanying the



Actors and actresses interact with the audience after their performance.



L'Inconnue de la Seine

sculpture said it was the death mask of a girl who drowned in the river.

Feng brought his purchase to China in the early 1930s, where it was destroyed by Red Guards during the Culture Revolution in 1966.

Thirty minutes before the

curtain rose, the performers were busy applying their make-up and practicing their lines.

"This is the first time I've been on stage," said Shi Junyi, who played Ji Xian-nian, the master of Chinese culture in the drama. "Since we are here today we have to give our best!"

After the two-hour show, Liang Guoqing, director of the National Theatre, walked the stage to give each of the performers a hug.

"Our performers are great. They are artists," Liang said. "Today they represented China's 16.9 million blind people."

The 54-year-old Liu Fenglin is a farmer from Changping District. Her husband is also disabled and uses a prosthetic limb. The two run a small store but

have a hard time protecting it from thieves.

One year ago, the couple heard of Hongdandan Blind Culture Service Center and started to participate in its events.

That was where Liu Fenglin first heard that drama could be recited instead of acted. Her good voice made her a natural choice for the chorus line.

Liu and the other actors are currently on a tour that includes Shenzhen, Wuhan, Changsha and Nanchang. The will perform on the Pioneer Stage again when they return to Beijing in late September.

Hongdandan Education and Culture Exchange Center said the play is a good way to raise awareness of blind people and enable them to expand their roles in society.

Dirty recycling businesses build ring of electronic waste

By Zhao Hongyi

More than 10 million used televisions, computers, phones, air conditioners, refrigerators and washing machines are dumped in Beijing each year. Only 16 percent ever make it to an official recycling center.

The remaining machines are picked up by private recyclers who do not adhere to the pollution and safety standards of their official peers.

Ultimately the devices are smashed, stripped for useful components and precious metals and dumped on the capital's outskirts, where an environmental disaster is brewing.



The private recycling yards that ring Beijing are an ecological mess and stand in stark contrast to their official peers.

BYD Photos

Looming disaster

At the east side recycling market, vendors buy up used machines and immediately set to work breaking them down in the open air.

"The casing on this electric fan is old and oxidized, but the core part are still usable," a vendor says. "We can throw a new cover on it and resell it."

The old casing tumbles into an open drain – one already clogged with broken plastic and electronic parts.

While their repaired fan may function, such refurbished electronics have caused several home fires and lethal electrocutions during the last few years.

Another nearby vendor sets to work disassembling an old television in search of precious metals and reusable parts, casually discarding each piece on the ground. When asked who will clean it up, he replies, "Someone else."

The recycling model seen on the east side was introduced in 2008 after national media reported on such practices in provinces of Guangdong and Fujian.

Recyclers view used piles

of electronic junk as a gold, silver and copper mine waiting to be discovered. Some even import discarded electronics from the US, Europe, Japan and South Korea. What they cannot salvage is dumped or burned, causing severe environmental damage to the neighboring community.

The effects are already being seen.

This year's reports of rice being tainted with toxic cadmium in Guangdong Province were traced back to paddies that neighbor similar recycling centers.

"But the business is profitable," said Qin Hanxiang, a recycler at Beiqijia Recycling Center, a community near Tiantongyuan on the city's north side.

Qin sources copper from old computers and gold from the contacts in mobile phones. Today he is also refurbishing old computer cards to sell online.

But low-profit plastic components are rarely given a second thought and are almost always burned.

Cleaning up

Recycling does not have to be a dirty business.

The Beijing government set up four recycling companies to process used electronics in 2006. All four have professional facilities to limit the release of polluting materials.

"Private recyclers are just after the valuable things like gold, copper and lightly used machines," said Wang Jianming, general manager of Huaxin Green Spring. "They never think about all the hazardous materials they are dumping, like fluorescent powder from televisions and Freon from refrigerators."

Since their establishment, the four state-owned recyclers have never operated at capacity. Huaxin Green Spring was built to process as many as 2.4 million television sets per year: it only manages to find 1 million.

The government recognized the trend in 2009, when it began granting subsidies to rural residents looking to upgrade their aging electronics. A ticket from one of the licensed recyclers was necessary to claim one's subsidy.

"Those good days are gone," said Wang Jianming. "When the subsidy vanished in early 2012, everything started moving back to private recyclers."

Private recyclers pay more and provide door-to-door services. They succeed purely because most people neither know nor care about the environmental impact of their trash, said Chen Liwen, a member of the NGO Natural University.

For its 12th Five Year Plan (2011-2015), the municipal government announced it would recycle 70 percent of its waste electronics. So far, only 16 percent are processed by professional channels.

TES-AMM Group Beijing was one of the four companies the city opened in 2006. It was designed to process 1,000 tons of electronic waste each year: it averages only 294 tons.

More needed

The central government has set up recycling companies in more than 30 cities: almost all of them are losing to private businesses that provide door-to-door collection.

What they do process is purchased at a mark-up from private recyclers: as much as 90 percent of what Huaxin Green Spring processes is acquired this way.

The mark-up has been crushing the profit margins of these state-owned companies.

Huaxin Green Spring opened a website on June 15 that allows users to notify the company to have their waste collected directly.

It has collected 2,742 television sets using the form – far less than how many it can process each day.

"We are running at 2 percent of our processing volume," Wang Jianxin said.

They are planning to expand the program to communities, schools and hospitals to promote the awareness and importance of proper recycling.

But many analysts say the only option may be for the state-owned recyclers to enter the market and sell components they recover from the machines on their own.

Winning a price war may be the only way to put China's private recyclers out of business.

The spirit of you



Bowls

By Zhao Hongyi

798 Art Zone became the epicenter of China's contemporary art in early 2000. But the last decade has seen it shift from a collection of workshops to a collection of galleries.

The zone has some 100 galleries and museums, as well as many popular cafes, restaurants and teashops. Galleries display everything from traditional ink paintings to futuristic industrial designs.

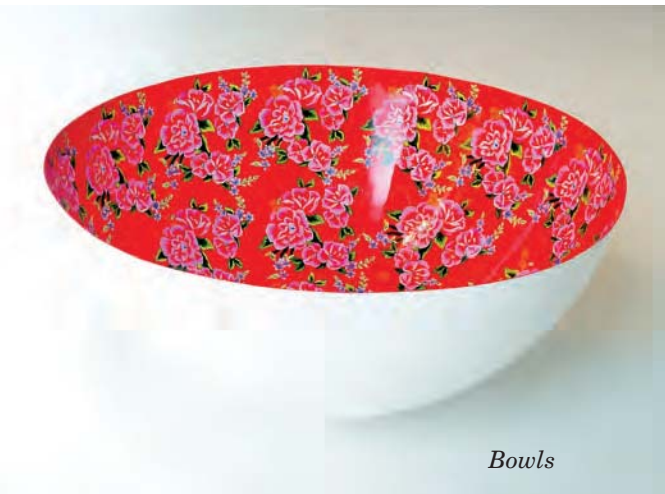
This week *Beijing Today* found two of the more interesting exhibitions to show 798 still has a few surprises for local art lovers. Both capture the spirit of China's younger artists: one of dreamy nostalgia and apprehension about the future.



Underwear



Bathtub



Bowls

Memories of red and green

Liang Long is the lead singer of Second Hand Rose, one of China's most famous rock bands of the last decade.

But before he became Beijing's famous drag-dressing rock singer in 2000, Liang worked as an artist in Harbin.

Most of his songs, including "Good Flower Red," "Revolution" and "I Want Fly," reflect Liang's blunt understanding of life and love – that both are ugly and usually about money.

His creations feature the red and green floral patterns typical of China's rural

northeast, where Russian influence is at its strongest. His red and green floral creations also extend to his clothing, which he makes himself, and much of the imagery currently used by his band.

This exhibition features Liang's latest design: a series of household wares that include bathtubs, sofas, wardrobes, bowls and tables.

"Most of my inspiration comes from my childhood and hometown. My experiences show through in all my songs and designs," Liang said. "These elements are pure and

simple – much like life and love that

Each piece captures a sense of nostalgia and long for

Liang's exhibition is part of the Asian Art Week

ated by Chinese artists. It displays art by

ists in turn, making it a must-see among 798's many

It also has a variety of items, including mirrors, coffee and



Yard After Snowing



Our Park



Pets Having Showings

Wang Yang

A generation's anxiety and dreams

Beyond Art Space is introducing three new Chinese artists who fret about the future in a joint exhibition titled *Never Land*.

Wang Yang, Guo Shuling and Liu Tianling are graduates of the Academy of Arts & Design of Tsinghua University, Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts and Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts respectively.

All three are known for their unusual approach to oil painting.

Liu uses oil and canvas to recreate dreamscapes in "Birds in Cubic Mirrors," "Flower Flow," "Lovebirds" and "Spotted Dog."

Guo is the most abstract of the group, with her "Dark Fragrance" and "Paradise Lost" series.

"Life should be beautiful as it is," she says. "Unfortunately, we have distorted what it means, and the root of our unhappiness and misfortune."

Wang is a younger artist and more interested in the direction of post-industrial society. His work "Suburb of Our City," "Yard after Snow," "Flower Flow" and "Shower on the Grassward," concern the ties of tomorrow.

Beyond Art Space provides a window into the world of contemporary art and the lives of young artists. The exhibition focuses on up-and-coming Asian contemporary artists who are still seeing an audience and a market.

The current exhibition ends in mid-September.

Beyond Art Space

Add: 798 East Street, 798 Art District, 4 Jiefang Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100015

Tel: 5978 9561

Web: beyondartspace.com

Admission: Free



Dark Fragrance

Liu Tingling



Paradise Lost series



Guo Shuling

th in 798

Liang Long (middle) and his band members from the Second Hand Rose



Toilet

simpler than the notions of we have today." appears to bleed with nos- or a sweeter, simpler time. tion ends September 15. rks is a joint gallery cre- and South Korean artists. y Chinese and Korean art- king it somewhat unusual re predictable galleries. large lobby selling souve- nacks.

Asian Art Works
Add: D-90-2, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Road, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5762 6338
Web: asianartworks.net
Admission: Free



Wedding Box

"Unfortu- this is the

ted in the s, such as "Paradise," possibilli-

the world artists. It ary artists

ber.

uxianqiao

Top lifestyle reporters pick China's best young artists

By Annie Wei

TMax! Public art festival is introducing Beijingers to the next generation of young artists.

The exhibition, hosted by Galaxy Soho through September 9, includes 54 works by 36 artists and is curated by some of the city's top lifestyle reporters.

During the exhibition, participating young artists will be encouraged to cooperate with commercial brands and fashion labels and to make their art more accessible to the public, said Ian Cao, director of China Young Artists Project (CYAP).

The project pledges to help young artists promote their work for five years at no charge. That includes arranging overseas exhibitions of their work.

CYAP visited the studios of many of the country's promising young artists to learn about their inspirations and living conditions. The information it collected spoke volumes about the artists' struggles.

"Fewer than 10 percent of the young artists earn a decent living from their art alone," Cao said.

For most artists, the purchase of a work studio is their first priority: only the best consider buying homes or cars.

As many as 70 percent have fewer than two exhibitions per year and can live by selling their works. The rest make up the slack with a second job.

"The first five years are the most crucial for a young artist," Cao said.

It's unusual that during such an important time their works would be curated by reporters and journalists instead of professional curators.

"Most artists have no connection to other parts of society. They live holed up in a rented flat and spend several months creating," said Cao, a graduate of sculpture at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.

That's where the reporters come in.

Teaming young artists with media writers gives them a chance to reach out to other industries and

get important feedback about their creations.

Gan Tian, a reporter for *China Daily*, was the first curator CYAP selected. Gan met CYAP through a luxury brand's promotional event and was immediately taken with the idea.

Too many works exhibited in galleries are too serious or inaccessible to the public, he said.

"We don't have the familiarity with art that you find in professional curators," Gan said. "That lets us judge art from our own viewpoint."

Gan and the other curators selected works that reflect beauty and resonate with their own interests.

Gan, who is obsessed with big city life, selected works that reflect urban life with a little inspiration from the recent film *The Great Gatsby*.

Another curator Amor Mao, from *Robert Report China*, likes wine and spirits, so he selected photos that connected the city's party and drinking scenes.

He Xiao, from *Sanlian Weekly*, selected paintings that reflected a dreamy interpretation of the universe.

All the works they selected came from CYAP's shortlist of artists.

Of all the young artists, it was Zhang Jiedong who most impressed the curators.

"We all loved his creations, but only one could be selected for this exhibition," Gan said. The rest are being shown at other exhibitions or sold.

Gan's favorite was a cross section of a house, giving viewers a peek into the goings-on of each floor.

"I think it reflects big city life, which makes people feel compartmentalized and isolated," he said.

The six curators' selections were far better than CYAP had originally expected, Cao said.

"They are all active and leading journalists in their respective areas. They had a very clear idea about what they liked," Cao said.

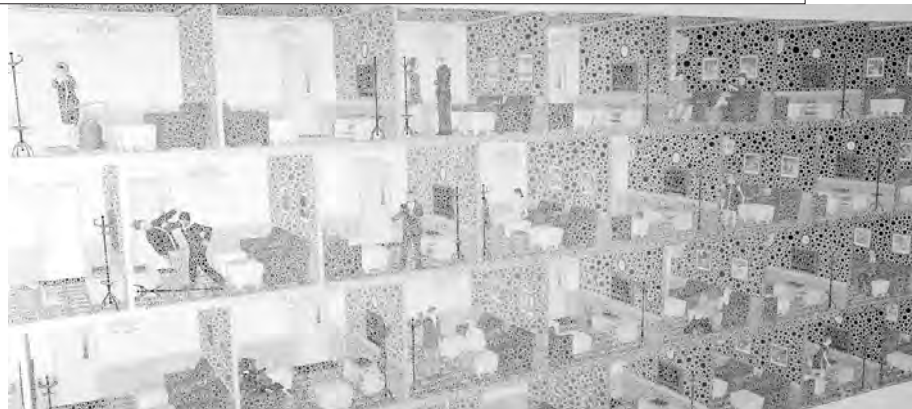
All works at the exhibition are priced 100,000 yuan or less.



Wu Dawei's sculpture *Consciousness*



Wang Weifeng's *Beautiful lies*



Zhang Jiedong's *The Foot Massage Center*

Photos provided by China Young Artists Project

Festival of affordable art

By Annie Wei

The third "I Can Pay" Art Festival opened this month at Xidan's Joy City mall.

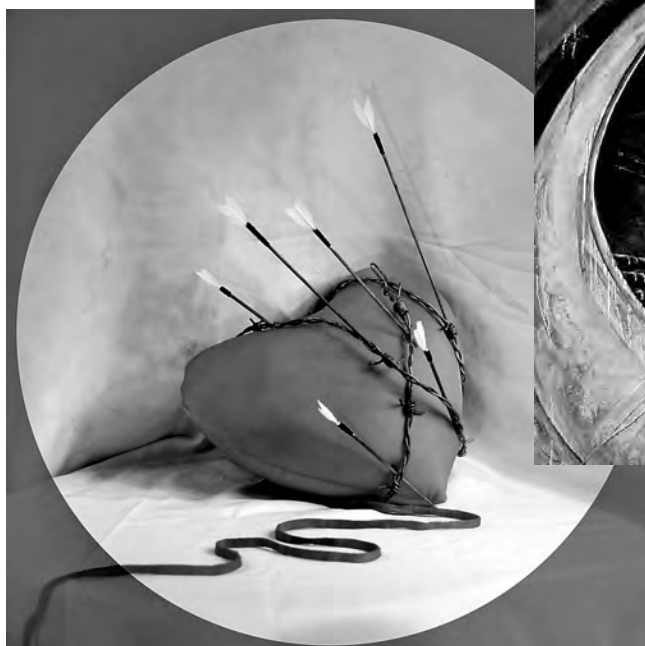
The festival, which ends September 1, presents and promotes "affordable" art for Chinese households. Nearly 1,000 pieces are on display on each floor of the mall.

Apart from four most common art categories – Chinese ink paintings, contemporary oil paintings, realistic oil paintings and sculptures and ceramics – the mall is also showing off real designer clothes, bags, toys and cellphone covers.

The most interesting work was one made with a 3D printer. Artist Zhou Changyong used a digital video recorder to collect random conversations with shoppers over a month, then printed these into an unusual sculpture.

Xidan Joy City

Where: 131 Xidan Bei Dajie, Xicheng District
Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6651 7777



Chen Xingzhou's Annoying Cupid



Li Hua's Travelling series

Photos provided by China Young Artists Project

Essential items for your fall look

By Annie Wei

The season is changing, and that means it's time to do some shopping! This week *Beijing Today* hit the streets to see what's "in" for fall 2013.



Animal prints are back

Fashion weeks and magazines are always an inspiration for what to wear. Animal prints seem to be back for this fall, and you can spot them on coats, trenches, pencil skirts and jumpers.

Website: hm.com/cn/



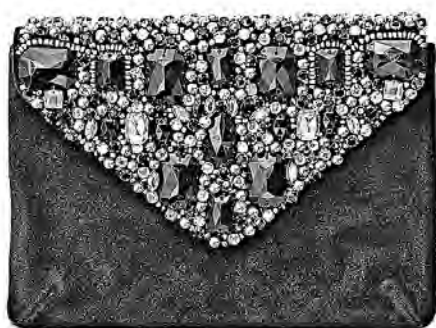
Leather jackets and shorts

A quality leather jacket is always practical regardless of one's age. Apart from the classic black, we recommend trying an olive or navy jacket.

Light colors are the year's most popular. Pair your jacket with a denim short skirt or an evening gown for an '80s rock look that has a certain sexiness.

Leather shorts have been extremely popular since last year. They are easy to pair with a white shirt and a pair of tough-looking boots.

Website: zara.com



Club Monaco's bling clutch

A cute clutch completes your weekend look. This Club Monaco's clutch exemplifies the newest incarnation of bling. Instead of being covered with gaudy sequins it has a few elegant crystals on the top.

Website: clubmonaco.com



Cashmere hats

These large-brim, soft hats look like something out of an early Hollywood movie. The burgundy-red hat is ideal for taking a walk through the forest in late fall.

Massimo Dutti

Where: 1F, South Building, The Place, 9 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6587 1188

CFP Photos

Known imperial cuisine restaurant offers afternoon tea

By Annie Wei

Located at the World Trade Center for nearly 20 years, Meiweizhen is known for its authentic imperial cuisine and Fotiaoqiang (298 yuan).

Fotiaoqiang, or Buddha Jumps the Wall, is a traditional Fujian dish with a rich variety of ingredients like pigeon eggs, bamboo shoots, scallops, sea

cucumbers, abalones, chicken, jinhua ham, pork tendons, ginseng, mushrooms and taro.

The dish is especially time consuming to prepare, and Meiweizhen's is delicious and not greasy.

The restaurant serves a famous Manchu-Han banquet, which features all the major dishes of the Han and Manchurian ethnicities.

The collection starts from 6,000 yuan for two.

For people looking for a lighter

meal, Meiweizhen is offering an afternoon tea set with delicate imperial snacks and Cantonese dim sum.

Its dim sum buffet starts from 128 yuan.

The restaurant is spacious and has waitresses dressed in imperial costume. It's worth a try if you have friends visiting Beijing and want to experience imperial dining.

Meiweizhen

Where: L301 Guomao, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Open: 10:30 am – 4:30 pm for

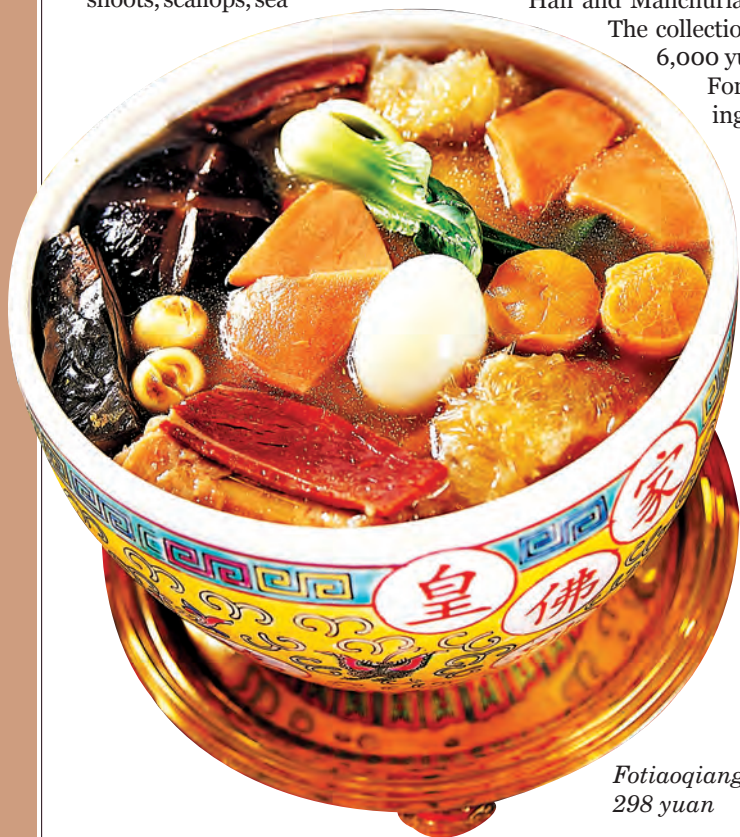


Braised sea cucumbers

Photos provided by Meiweizhen

afternoon tea; 11:30 am – 3 pm and 5:30-10 pm

Tel: 6505 6139



Fotiaoqiang, 298 yuan

Matsumoto introduces new menu

By Annie Wei

Matsumoto is a famous Tokyo restaurant with a history of more than 100 years. Most Chinese diners know it for hosting the wedding banquet of Sun Yat-sen and Soong Ching-ling in 1914.

The time-honored eatery opened a Beijing branch of its famous grill in 2008.

Although the restaurant offers "buffet" dining at three prices, you still have to order your food through a waiter. This keeps the restaurant's traffic under control and ensures each dish is freshly grilled.

More than 80 dishes have been added to the restaurant's menu.

For 198 yuan you can try its new beef and roe rolls and fried razor clams.

We recommend spending 268 yuan for



Inside Matsumoto

Photo provided by Songbenlou

its stewed beef shank, tender and delicious; or its seafood salad with tuna, salmon and sweet shrimp.

The grilled Austrian beef costs 368 yuan and is guaranteed to be yummy!

Matsumoto – Chaoyang outlet

Where: 2F Full Link Plaza, 18 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6588 6608

Pavilion Grill still Gongti's most relaxing haunt



The Pavilion Grill is ideal for a romantic dinner.

By Annie Wei

The Pavilion Grill, located on the east side of Worker's Stadium, has been a hidden gem since 2005. The restaurant is especially popular with diners who prefer a nice environment.

In its early years it was known as a sports bar, boasting a large selection of whiskeys and a glass wine cellar. When it reopened this August, it positioned itself as a fine dining establishment paired with a European garden.

We recommend its traditional Azerbaijani barbecue, starting from 68 yuan for lamb ribs; 84 yuan for veal skewers; 88 yuan for grilled king prawns; or 360 yuan for a platter of six roasted meats.

Late summer and early fall is the best time for outdoor dining. You can try Pavilion's happy hour with buy-one-get-one-free drinks from 2 to 7 pm.

Its signature martinis, priced 58 yuan, come in

strawberry, watermelon, berry and passion fruit; the mojitos are 58 yuan and Carlsberg beer is 35 yuan.

The spacious garden has tall and lush trees, making it a romantic spot for eating out with your significant other or hosting a wedding.

The Pavilion Grill hosts outdoor weddings throughout the year. The chilly winter makes for a scenic snow wedding, and the beautiful interior is spacious enough to seat hundreds of guests.

The Pavilion Grill

Where: East Gate of Worker's Stadium, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 2 am the next day

Tel: 6551 6680



Pavilion's outdoor garden

Photos provided by the Pavilion Grill



Grill king prawn, 88 yuan